AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently amended) A method of improving a paved surface comprising the steps of:

applying a layer of liquefied asphalt on a surface;

applying a mat over the liquefied asphalt, the mat comprising a nonwoven mat produced from fibers having a melting point above ~~about~~ 330°F (177°C) selected from the group consisting of mineral fibers, polymer fibers, and mixtures thereof, the liquefied asphalt penetrating and soaking the mat; and

applying a layer of paving material over the mat~~.~~;

wherein the mat has a minimum ultimate elongation of at least 5%, and the mat has a load-elongation behavior such that when the mat is subject to tensile stress, the mat achieves at least 90% of its ultimate load at an elongation not greater than 5% of the specimen length in the direction of applied stress.

20-21. (Canceled)

22. (Currently amended) A ~~mat~~ method according to claim 19 wherein the fibers have a melting point of at least about 350°F (177°C).

23-38. (Canceled)

39. (New) A method of improving a paved surface comprising the steps of:

applying a layer of liquefied asphalt on a surface;

applying a mat over the liquefied asphalt, the mat comprising a nonwoven mat produced from fibers having a melting point above 330°F (177°C) selected from the group consisting of mineral fibers, polymer fibers, and mixtures thereof, the liquefied asphalt penetrating and soaking the mat; and

applying a layer of paving material over the mat;

wherein the mat has a minimum ultimate elongation of at least 5%, and the mat has a load-elongation behavior such that when the mat is subject to tensile stress, the mat achieves at least 90% of its ultimate load at an elongation not greater than 5% of the specimen length in the direction of applied stress; and

wherein the mat is resistant to shrinkage such that when a 4 ounce (113.4 gram) sample of the mat is held in an oven at 325°F (163°C) for one minute, the area of the mat is reduced to not less than about 90% of its original area.

40. (New) A method according to claim 39 wherein the fibers have a melting point of at least about 350°F (177°C).